

# Chief of defence staff (CDS)

August 23, 2019

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**In news:** The government has appointed **General Bipin Rawat** as country's **first chief of defence staff (CDS)**.

## **Content:**

- The CDS will act as the **Principal Military Adviser to the defence minister on tri-services matters**.
- **The CDS was one of the 99 recommendations made by Lt. Gen. (retd.) D.B. Shekatkar Committee, which submitted its report in December 2016.**
- The Army, Navy and IAF chiefs will have operational command of their forces.
- He is the **single-point military adviser to the government**.



- CDS is a **four-star general** like the three chiefs, the CDS will be the **'first among equals'** in the hierarchy.
- CDS would come in the **ambit of RTI Act, 2005**.
- The government has amended rules putting the **maximum age limit of 65 years** for the CDS by making changes in the Army Rules, 1954.

## Role and responsibilities of CDS:

- The **broad mandate of the CDS** includes bringing about jointness in "operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services".
- CDS has been assigned the task of **integrating different assets and resources** of the armed forces.
- The CDS **would not exercise any military command** including over the three Service Chiefs.

- In his capacity as the **Permanent Chairman, COSC (Chiefs of Staff Committee)**, the CDS would administer tri-Services organisations, special operations, cyber and space.
- **Special Operations Division**, headquartered in Agra, will be **headed by the Army**.
- The **Defence Cyber Agency (DCA)**, based in Delhi, will be **headed by the Navy**.
- **Defence Space Agency**, based in Bengaluru, headed by the **Indian Air Force**.
- The CDS will also **head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** within the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and **function as its Secretary**.
- The CDS will be a **member of the Defence Acquisition Council** chaired by the Defence Minister and **Defence Planning Committee** chaired by the National Security Adviser (NSA).
- The CDS will be a **member (Military Adviser) of Prime Minister-led Nuclear Command Authority** which looks after nuclear weapons of the country.

#### Department of Military Affairs (DMA):

- A Department of Military Affairs has been created in the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- It will be the **fifth department in the MoD**.
- The **existing ones are** the Department of Defence, the Department of Defence Production, the Department of Defence Research and Development and the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare.
- The DMA **would deal with:**
  - the armed forces;
  - the integrated headquarters of the MoD, comprising the Army, Naval and Air;
  - defence staff headquarters;
  - the Territorial Army and
  - works relating to the three Services and

procurement exclusive to them except capital acquisitions.

- The **DMA's mandate includes** promoting jointness in procurement, training and staffing for the Services, facilitating restructuring of the military commands for optimal utilisation of resources and promoting the use of indigenous equipment.

**Note:** At present, India has 17 single-service commands and only **two tri-Service commands** – **Andaman and Nicobar Command**, a theatre or regional command, and the **Strategic Forces Command**, which handles the nuclear weapons.

Apart from being much more cost-effective, theatre commands are required for the conduct of **synergized land-air-sea operations** with unity of command in modern-day warfare. PM Modi in his speech on Kargil Vijay Diwas, 2019 had stressed on **“jointness”** and had called for a connect among three Services in terms of **“action and system.”**

Hence CDS is expected to inject much-needed synergy in **planning, procurements, training and logistics** among the Army, Navy and IAF. It helps in **inter-Service prioritization** to systematically build the country's military capabilities within budgetary constraints.

### **PREVIOUS ARTICLE**

**Source:** *Economic Times*

### **Manifest pedagogy:**

The long due reform of Chief of Defence Staff has seen the light of the day. The new institutions in defence sector and space will be of prime importance. Their structure is important for Prelims whereas their functioning is important for Mains.

**In news:** Recently in his Independence Day speech honourable

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement of establishing the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for the three services – the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force.

**Placing it in syllabus:** Defense reforms (explicitly mentioned)

**Dimensions:**

- Need for CDS
- Background for CDS
- Structure of CDS
- Impact

**Content:** Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a post that will act as the **single-point advisor to the Government of India**. An “implementation committee” comprising senior officials would be formed to examine the role and charter of the CDS and the modalities for implementing the appointment. The committee will give its recommendations to the government in the next two to three months. Army chief General Bipin Rawat is the front-runner for the post.

Need for CDS:

- It is necessary to have a **professional body of the highest standing to facilitate ‘jointmanship’** and render **single-point military advice** to the government on matters of national security.
- It is necessary to “**reconcile possible differences**” in service-specific opinions to enable the government to arrive at considered military decisions.
- CDS is best justified by the importance of strategising for a **robust and cost-efficient national defence policy**.
- CDS helps in fostering **inter-services jointness** in terms of budgeting, equipment purchases, training, joint doctrines and planning of military operations which is imperative of modern warfare.
- Department of Defence, as of now, is headed by a

generalist civil servant who has been made responsible for the Defence of India and every part thereof.

- As the scope of warfare is changing and becoming technology driven, Indian defence should not have a “fragmented” approach.
- With its sprawling land borders, long coastlines and complex national security threats and challenges, India needs a theatre system for integrated functioning to achieve synergy in operations by optimally exploiting limited resources.
- Other countries like the US, France, the UK and China all have a Chief of Defence Staff and country like India should not lag behind in its defence policies.

#### Background for CDS:

- The recommendation for creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was first made after the **1999 Kargil War**.
- A high-level committee that was set up to examine the gaps in the country’s security system in the wake of the Kargil War had recommended that the three services should have a Chief of Defence Staff.
- Consequent to the submission of this Committee report, a **group of ministers (GoM)** headed by the then Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani had analysed the functioning of the higher defence organisation in India.
- Among the major recommendations of this GoM was the establishment of the post of CDS with a tri-Service joint planning staff HQ.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) accepted this recommendation but held its implementation in abeyance due to lack of political consensus and opposition within certain sections of the armed forces and the bureaucracy.
- In 2012, the Naresh Chandra Task Force recommended that post of a permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff

Committee (CoSC) should be created. The CoSC comprises chiefs of the Indian Army, Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. The senior-most among them would act as the chairman.

### Structure of CDS:

- The officer concerned will be in a position to advise on matters related to all the three services – Army, Navy and Air Force, thus **making India's armed forces integrated.**
- He will be a **'first among equals', a fourth four-star officer who will be senior to the three other service chiefs.**
- The implementation committee to be set up will examine whether CDS will report to the PM, will he handle training and acquisition and issues such as pension.
- The committee will also chart out the issues that will be handled by the CDS, the three services chiefs and the defence ministry.
- The committee could also explore the possibility of the CDS being a part of the Cabinet Committee on Security, which takes all decisions on national security. (Currently, the service chiefs are not part of it).
- The functions of the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISD) including Defence Intelligence Agency and joint operations, training and rescue and relief will be handled by the CDS.
- The three tri-services to handle modern warfare domains, Space, Cyber and Special Forces, will also come under the CDS.
- Following the CDS appointment, single service commands could be transformed into theatre commands for better joint operations.

### Impact of CDS:

The CDS will help prevent duplication, streamline logistics

and improve training. CDS presents the opportunity to optimize defence economics and make expenditure more effective as India's defense expenditure has a lion's share in budget expenditures. Moreover, **India is the second largest arms importer in the world** in 2014-2018 (first is Saudi Arabia).

CDS helps the Armed Forces to make optimal use of the national resources allocated to them. Hence CDS acts as an economist to the defence ministry, which is the need of the hour. The appointment of the CDS will certainly change the civil-military balance, and will address some of the grievances of the Armed Forces pertaining to their status vis-a-vis the civil services.

The CDS will be dealing with the three services chiefs for better coordination, especially towards modernisation which will be made more compatible with each other in terms of weapon systems and communications being procured. This will ensure that one service doesn't modernise way ahead of the others and all will remain at par.

India's prevailing security environment is marked by regional instability with a nuclear overhang, unresolved territorial disputes with China and Pakistan, Pakistan's proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir and repeated air space violations, More than ever before, it is now necessary for the national security decision makers to be given "single-point military advice" that takes into account the operational strengths and weaknesses and aids to meet complex emerging challenges. Such advice can come only from an empowered CDS.